

De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde

Contemporary Moral Problems

Business and Information Technology Ethics Reader

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to:

God
To my family
Friends
Classmates
Professors

Without the help of this people, I will not finish this book. Thank you for giving me the inspiration that I need. All of this will not be possible without you. It was my opportunity to create my own book and to give knowledge to other people who will in the future read the same articles that I have encountered. Thank you!

Preface

This compilation of my work is done by reading different materials about ethical theories. I have learned to differentiate and identify the evolution of each ideas how they are argued by different philosophers and giving me the knowledge on how we come up with what we have today. I am thankful that I was given a chance to know it and to know different perspective that given by the philosophers. Reading this materials help me to enhance my thinking skills in the perspective of our life. There are topics that take me long to understand because of the vocabulary that they have given, it was too deep for me and let us discuss what is it all about. In understanding this topics all we have to do is apply patience and hardwork because in the end our understanding will be better. People may have different perspective in life because of his/her cultures but it must not hinders us from getting to know each one and apply what we have learned in this ethical theories. We maybe different but still there will be something similar that will binds us all and work together for better solutions or results that we need.

Ethical Theories

Egoism and Moral Scepticism

James Rachels

What I expect to learn: To understand well what is the difference and the importance of the egoism and moral scepticism.

Quote: “If I have promised to do something, and if I do not want to do it, then it is simply false to say that I want to keep my promise”

Review:

Being sceptical views suggested by Glaucon have come to be known as psychological egoism and ethical egoism respectively. Psychological egoism is the view of that all men are selfish in everything that they do, that is, that the only motive from which anyone ever acts is self-interest. While ethical egoism is by contrast, a normative view about how men ought to act. Regardless of how men do in fact behave, they have no obligation to do anything except what is in their own interest.

There is some part that shows the unselfish behaviour of a person. There are arguments that are discussed like the topic regarding unselfishness of a person in a situation either on being selfish or not. It was also discussed that an egoist is not be such a bad man even in descriptions means selfishness. The chapter also converse about the every one's advantage to preserve a stable society where the people's interests are protected. The egoist primary policy of action would be to act in such a way to bring about as nearly possible. The egoist challenge to our ordinary moral convictions amounts to a demand for an explanation of why we should adopt certain policies of action, namely policies in which good of others is given importance. The point is that the welfare of human beings is something that most of us value for its own sake and not merely for the sake of something else.

What I've learned: I learned that we only have to interpret the egoist position in a sympathetic way. Also I learned that any action or policy of action is right entails that it is right for anyone in the same sort of circumstances. Which means that if only for me It is right to do because it is just the requirement that we consistent in our evaluations. It does not necessarily means that I am right.

Integrative Questions:

1. What can egoism and moral scepticism help us in our daily life?
2. What is the egoist challenge?
3. How can we take care the welfare of human beings?
4. What is the primary policy of egoist?
5. What is the challenge of an egoist?

Religion, Morality, and Conscience

John Arthur

What I expect to learn: I will know what are the effects of religion, morality and conscience in our life especially its connectivity to our personality and what will be our application in our daily life.

Quote: “Morality is therefore inherently social, in a variety of ways. It depends on socially learned language is learned from interactions with others in society.”

Review:

The introduction of this chapter is about John Arthur and John Dewey as two persons who discusses about the morality and religion. John Arthur discusses three points or ways that morality has been thought. First, that religion is necessary to provide guidance to people in their search for the correct course of action, second, without religious motivation people could not be expected to do the right thing, lastly, religion is essential for there even to be right and wrong.

Religion is discussed by different practices there are texts that might also be taken as authoritative, indicating the ways God has acted in history and his role in their lives or the lives of their ancestors. It also involves beliefs in supernatural power that created and control nature, the tendency to worship and pray to supernatural forces. It was also by the influence of history that religions evolve in a place. John Dewey is not saying that what is right is finally to be determined by the reactions of actually existing other people, or even by the reaction of society as a whole. Conscience is social not in the sense that morality is determined by surveying what others in society think. Understood as the voice of an assembly of others within each of us, conscience cannot be reduced to the expected reaction of any existing individual or group.

Lastly, the chapter leads to its final point about moral education. Morality not only be taught but must be, early training, moral thinking depends on our ability to imagine others reactions to imaginatively put ourselves into them.

What I've learned: I learned that morality is cannot be exists without border, social perspective introduces by others. All, we have learned is by means of influences and practices. We should not just put aside on what we know and what we should know.

Integrative Questions:

1. Where morality came from?
2. What is the effect of religion in our life?
3. What leads us to moral education?
4. What are the three points of morality that John Arthur discusses?
5. How did the religion is being discussed?

Master and Slave Morality

Friedrich Nietzsche

What I expect to learn: To understand the morality about master and slave. How did it start and who studied for this morality. What are the readings that discusses this topic.

Quote: “Noble soul accepts the fact of his egoism without question but rather that have basis in the primary law things: if he sought a designation for it he would say: It is justice itself”

Review:

Friedrich Nietzsche he summarized the difference between master morality and slave morality. The master morality that emphasizes power, strength, egoism, and freedom as distinguished from slave morality that calls for weakness, submission, sympathy and love.

This topic is about the elevation of the type of man like an aristocratic society. It was also the scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings and requiring slavery in some form. There are samples of what aristocratic society is. This aristocracy had abdicated step by step its lordly prerogatives and lowered itself to a function of royalty. For having a good and healthy aristocracy is that it should not regard itself as a function either of kingship.

The noble type of man regards himself as the determiner of values, he is the only who confers honours on whatever he recognizes such morality is self-glorification. He also honor himself as the most powerful one like what an old Scandinavian saga. Noble morality is not a modern ideas but a present difficult to realize, unearth and disclose.

The slave morality are the abused, oppressed, suffering, unemancipated, and weary. It is the essentially the morality of utility. It also gain the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to give significance to a word good and stupid.

What I've learned: I learned that even in the past years it has been a problem about the master and slave issue. Which belong to the society and which is not. It shows the situation of each type of person in a society. It is just so disappointing that a lot of people is being discriminated and suffered by the action of what we called the master and the noble man of the society.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is noble morality?
2. What are the effects of this topic to our past?
3. How can it be possible to remove this kind of somewhat discrimination to our society?
4. Who are the type of people that master morality discusses?
5. Who are the type of people that slave master morality discusses?

Trying Out One's New Sword

Mary Midgley

What I expect to learn: To know the behind meaning of the topic and how does it connect to our life or to our history.

Quote: “Understanding has degrees. It is not a slapdash yes-or-no matter. Intelligent outsiders can progress in it, and in some ways will be at an advantage over the locals. But if this so, it must clearly apply to ourselves as much as anybody else.”

Review:

Mary Midgley discusses about the moral isolationism, it is essentially a doctrine of immoralism because it forbids any moral reasoning. It falsely assumes that culture are separate and unmixed whereas most cultures are in fact formed out of many influences.

The verb from classical Japanese which means trying out one's new sword on a chance wayfarer means tsujigiri that lead to a crossroad-cut. It came from the history of a samurai sword that having new one means that it had to be tried out because if it was work properly it had to slice through someone in a single blow from shoulder to opposite site.

It maybe weird for us to hear this kind of story or reality because we belong to different culture and we have a lot of differences all we have to do is to respect them. We are not qualify to criticize them because we are not member of that culture. Isolating barriers if this arises our own culture could never have been formed. It only means of closing our minds to the new culture that we encountered. Setting up standards for the world might cause distractions because a lot of people will disagree on it.

The moral scepticism will lead to inaction, to losing all interest in moral questions, most of all in those which concern other societies.

What I've learned: I learned that our culture is compose of different influences such as Spanish and Chinese. We can recognize it because we always follow to it. Like preparing “Pancit” every birthday because we believe that it is for long life. The topic promote to reduce moral judgement.

Integrative Questions:

1. What can be the effect of our culture influence by a lot of culture?
2. What we should do if we encounter different culture?
3. How can isolating barriers affect our life?
4. What is the meaning of tsujigiri?
5. What will moral scepticism will lead us?

Utilitarianism

John Stuart Mill

What I expect to learn: To know and understand well the concept of utilitarianism and how it is related to other topic that was already discussed.

Quote: “The end of human action is necessarily also the standard of morality which accordingly be defined.”

Review:

John Stuart Mill started discussing topic and subtopics about utilitarianism. He is one of the most influential British Philosopher. He discussed about the two principle of utilitarianism, which is the principle of utility(greatest happiness principle) and hedonistic principle that happiness is pleasure. The Greatest Happiness Principle holds that actions are right in proportions as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. There is also a part that Epicureans was discussed that they always answered that it is not they but their accusers who represent human nature in a degrading light. The comparison of the Epicurean life to that beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beasts pleasures do not satisfy a human beings conceptions of happiness.

Utilitarianism could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit. Happiness forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct is not the agent’s own happiness but of al concerned. The utilitarian doctrine is about happiness that it is desirable and the only thing desirable as an end. They also discussed that all other things being only desirable as means to an end and what to be required that what conditions is requisite that the doctrine should be fulfill. Happiness has made out its title as one of the ends of conducts and consequently one of the criteria of morality. The ingredients of happiness are very various and each of them is desirable in itself and not merely when considered as swelling an aggregate.

What I’ve learned: I learned that utilitarian writers have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, and uncostliness that in their circumstantial advantages rather than in the intrinsic nature.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is the idea of utilitarianism?
2. What are the two concepts originated from utilitarianism?
3. How can happiness help in our life?
4. What are the ingredients of happiness?
5. How can we attain utilitarianism?

The Debate over Utilitarianism

James Rachels

What I expect to learn: To know the different arguments about the concept of utilitarianism and I want to know what will be the effect if the people will be open to this kind of topic.

Quote: “Happiness is not something that is recognized as good and sought for its own sake.”

Review:

The first topic was about James Rachels the he presents the main objections to utilitarianism. It is correct in telling us to consider consequences of actions and advising us to be impartial, but incorrect in ignoring other important moral considerations such as merit. The next topic is only elaboration of topic about utilitarianism and giving proof from the previous persons who studied utilitarianism. Lastly, the next discussion is about different arguments that was done.

The first defense is tackles about the examples used in the antiutilitarianism arguments are unrealistic and do not describe situations that come up in the world. Utilitarianism as a guide for decision making in situations we face.

The second defense tackles about how weak the first defense is. It is saving utilitarianism by revising a theory to meet the criticism. It discusses that rule-utilitarian as new theory to contrast it with the original theory now commonly called act-utilitarianism. Rule utilitarianism cannot be convicted of violating our moral common sense or of conflicting with ordinary ideas of justice, personal rights.

The third defense talks about the Act Utilitarianism that recognizes to be radical doctrine which implies that many of our ordinary moral feelings may be mistaken. It challenges us to rethink of matters that we have heretofore taken for granted. It also discussed about the group of utilitarianism that had very different response to any utilitarian arguments. It was pointing towards the classical theory.

What I’ve learned: I learned that in some real life cases utilitarianism will come into conflict with common sense. Also, each individual action is to be evaluated by reference to its own particular consequences.

Integrative Questions:

1. What can common sense do to us?
2. In your own opinion among the three defense where you will stand? Why?
3. How can consequences affect us?
4. Which among the three defense uses utilitarianism as a guide for decision making?
5. What defense that recognizes radical doctrine?

The Categorical Imperative

Immanuel Kant

What I expect to learn: I expect to learn how it will help me to improve my moral understanding today.

Quote: “Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as means, but always at the same time as an end”

Review:

This topic is being discussed by Immanuel Kant, he is a German and one of the most important philosopher. He believes that our moral duty can be formulated in one supreme rule. The next topic is about the good will, base on the book it was about the intelligence, wit, judgement, and any other talents of our mind. It will be hurtful and bad when this good will turned into bad. The subtopics is good will and its results and good will and duty. The good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes but because of fitness for attaining some proposed end. It is the effect of the goodwill. While the good will and duty it requires not so much to be taught as merely to be clarified, always holds the highest place in estimating the total worth of our actions and constitutes the condition of all the rest.

Categorical Imperative according to the universal law it was being robbed the will of every inducement that arises for it as a consequence of obeying a particular law and nothing is being left but the conformity of actions and must serve the will as its principle. Included in this part of the discussion about hypothetical imperative and categorical imperative, the hypothetical imperative is about not knowing a topic and its content beforehand while the categorical imperative is you immediately know what the content of each topic.

The practical principle its ground is rational nature exists as an end in itself. This is the way in which man necessarily conceives own existence, it is therefore so far a subjective principle of human actions.

What I've learned: I learned that the power of determining oneself to action is in accordance with the ideas of certain laws. Also, a power can be found only in rational beings.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is the difference between hypothetical and categorical imperative?
2. What is the ground of practical principle?
3. What can the good will do to us?
4. What will happen if the good will turned into bad?
5. What is the effect of goodwill?

Happiness and Virtue

Aristotle

What I expect to learn: I expect to learn what is the difference between happiness and virtue and how the people gave importance to each of it.

Quote: “Happiness then is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing in the world”

Review:

The topic is being discussed by Aristotle made important contributions to all areas of philosophy, including the formulation of traditional logic. He argues that all human beings seek happiness and that happiness is not pleasure, honor or wealth, but an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. Moral virtue comes from training and habit and generally state of character that is a mean between vices of excess and deficiency. They also discuss about the three prominent of life that just mentioned, the political, and the complete life.

Happiness as being discussed is the one that we choose for always itself and never for the sake of something else. The topic between principle of obedient and principle of possessing it was discussed by the topic of active life. It is acquired by learning or by habituation or some other sort of training. The gift of god to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be given, and most surely god-given of all human things inasmuch as it is the best. It is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue.

Virtue has two kinds it is intellectual and moral. Intellectual is main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching and moral virtue it comes as a result of habit and arises by nature. Virtue is state of character. It brings into good condition the thing of which it is excellence and makes work of that thing be done well. There are acts that is mentioned brave acts and virtuous acts.

What I’ve learned: I learned we cannot be happy without external goods. It is for our self sufficient and action. The life of the people who is active in accordance with virtue will be happy.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is the difference between happiness and virtue?
2. What will you choose from the topic as you continue your life? Why?
3. What will happen if both happiness and virtue is will be gone in each one of us?
4. Where did the moral virtue come from?
5. What are the two kinds of virtue?

The Nature and Value of Rights

Joel Feinberg

What I expect to learn: To know what will happen to us if we do not have rights at all. I will understand the author on how he gave importance to our rights and how he illustrates the possible condition if our rights are not with us.

Quote: “They only party wronged by the sovereign’s mistreatment of his subjects was God, the supreme law maker. Thus, in repenting cruelty to his subjects, the sovereign might say to God. To thee only I have sinned.”

Review:

Joel Feinberg is a philosophy professor, he demonstrates that rights are morally important. He shows it by letting us imagine the Nowheresville. It is a world that likely to be same as our world but it do not have rights at all. As a result people in this world cannot make moral claims when they treated unjustly. They cannot demand or claim just treatment, and so they are deprived of self respect and human dignity. The next topic is about the doctrine of the logical correlativity of rights and duties. It was about all duties entail other people’s rights and all rights entail other people’s duty. Joel tried to put and introduce Kant and duty to Nowheresville but only in the sense of actions that are or believed to be. The next that was introduced are the two moral practices these are the notions of personal desert and sovereign monopoly of rights. The next that was introduced was social and economic practices but with a twist instead the topic that was introduced was the curious notion of all sovereign right monopoly. This sovereign had a certain duty to treat subjects well but this duty was owed no to the subjects directly but to God. Lastly, he pointed that the topic will be devoted to an analysis of what precisely a world is missing when it does not contain rights and why that absence is morally important. At the end he distinguishes the difference of our world to Nowheresville. Our world is about claiming while in Noweheresville people are discriminated against invidiously they do not over power to one another.

What I’ve learned: I learned a lot from this topic first the importance of our rights, second is how we are bless to have our rights in our hands and lastly, what will be the effect of lose of our rights. It let me realize a lot of things that I should be taking care of because we are fortunate enough to have this kind of world.

Integrative Questions:

1. What are the topic that are being introduce to Nowheresville?
2. What can we learn from this topic?
3. What will you contribute to help our rights be still at our hands?
4. What will the sovereign did to us?
5. What are the difference between our world and Nowheresville?

Taking Rights Seriously

Ronald Dworkin

What I expect to learn: To know what are the consequences and good effect of taking rights seriously and what kinds of rights are being discusses and what we acquire.

Quote: “Although citizens have a right to free speech, the government may over ride that right when necessary to protect the rights of others or to prevent a catastrophe or even obtain a clear major public benefit.”

Review:

Ronald Dworkin is a University professor of law. He has many works. In his point of view if a people have a right to do something, then it is wrong to interfere with them.

There are three subtopics which is rights of citizens and rights and rights to break a law, and controversial rights. The rights of citizen is about government giving us rights with the companion of our law and give them samples of rights. There are problems of the government that is shared this problems leads to questions according to the constitution. It also reminds us that no judicial decision is necessarily the right decisions.

The next topic is rights and right to break the law, this was about for people having thoughts that they are right in what way they are doing but it is wrong for him to do that. Breaking law is because of conflicts between conscience and the response of the person. They also share how the government is being unfair for the rights of each citizen. It is like government being selfish for avoiding the catastrophic events that might occur. The last topic is controversial rights.

Two models which are government infringes and government inflates. The government infringes is the balancing of public interest against personal claims and established in our political and judicial rhetoric. The second model is about the familiarity idea of political equality.

What I’ve learned: I learned that without rights means that you do not have power to voice out what you want and there are a lot of people that will take advantage of it like using their power for their own good.

Integrative Questions:

1. What are the two models of rights?
2. What could happen if there is no right?
3. What are the examples of rights?
4. Why does a person break a law?
5. What are the consequences of law?

A Theory of Justice

John Rawls

What I expect to learn: To know what are the concepts of the author to the topic and what is the real meaning of justice.

Quote: “Obviously if justice as fairness succeeds reasonably well, a next step would be to study the more general view suggested by the name “rightness as fairness””.

Review:

John Rawls is a professor at a University. He said there are two principles of justice. The first principle is about equal basic liberties and second principle is about the arrangement of social and economic inequalities.

The main idea of theory of justice according to the book is it was choose by our negligence. Justice is about fairness. To identify the concept of justice, a person should know which principle of justice will be chosen. These are two parts of contract that occur in choosing; first, is the interpretation of situation of problem being choose and the second part is the set of principles that will be agreed.

Two principle of justice are first; each person must be equal, second; social and economic inequalities should be arranged. This was based on our society so that there will not be social and economic inequalities and that can still practice our freedom of speech. The principles are said to be arranged in order it is because of the hierarchy in our society. The wealth should be equally distributed. Just like theory of justice it depends to the theory of society. The next thing that was discussed is injustice, it was about people engaging in inequalities that do not help to one another. The social primary goods are the rights and liberties, power and opportunities, income and wealth. There are other primary goods such as health, intelligence etc., we have this goods due to the influence of our basic structure. The article do not promote slavery and we are encourage to turn our economic condition to improve to exchange with two principles. There is an advantage of making principles in order is that the first priorities area easily recognized and have resolutions to it. They also says that every primary social goods have an important role in our life that without it we will fail.

The principles have advantage and disadvantages one is that the interference of each principles to one another. The next point is that when principles involve persons will start new structures. Their view in their social life will be change. Lastly, principle of utility will allow us to compensate for losses by gains of others. The principles requires that all of us should benefit from economic and social inequalities.

What I've learned: I learned there are a lot of topics discussed and argued so that we will have idea of what is justice all about. Justice is all about equalities to all. If we are equal judging will improve. It encourages us to live equally and it will help our society gain from what we should have. Lastly, the general concept of justice is to improve everyone's life.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is the main idea of theory of justice?
2. What are the problem in choosing principles?
3. What are the social primary goods?
4. What is the real concept of justice?
5. What are the focuses of the two principles of justice?

The Need for More than Justice

Annete Baier

What I expect to learn: To know if it is all just about justice or something else. To know the evolution of justice according to different perspective of different philosophers who focuses on the theme of justice.

Quote: “Women is perceive and construe social reality differently from men, and that these differences center around experiences of attachment and separation... the major changes in women’s lives would seem to involve changes in the understanding and activities of care.”

Review:

Annete Baier contradicts the perspective of philosophers like Kant, Rawls, and Gilligan about justice. She claims that justice is not enough as moral theory because it only focuses on inequalities of people. She also points out that the best moral theory with harmonize justice and care. At first, Annete Baier give time for the reader to see the differences of each perspective per philosophers and later on she discusses her point of view.

The blacks and women are known for being aware and the one who give importance to justice because of the issue against racist and sexist injustices. The difference of each view regarding justice like Rawls he incorporates value of freedom into his account of justice, while Gilligan call ethics of cares as justice. The care that can be seen to fraternity and sorority but later on change to perspective about moral and social issues ever it is difficult to discuss as one because of justice perspective and care perspective. Later on Annete summarizes about the differences of each perspective. According to her Gilligan she’s herself to be challenging from its moral maturity to social structures that is all about encouragement.

Annete give her point of view by the challenges of Gilligan. First is about the individualism from the western tradition. This will protect individuals from the disturbances. While Rawls give importance to rational life. The concept of rights is developed by the moral tradition. Women as being compared to men are not equally treated. They still stick to the point that each women should stay at home. Annete discusses her three reasons so that women should not just be contented to their liberal morality; first, was dubious record, second was inattention to relations of inequality or simulation of equality, third, inattention to unchosen relations.

What I’ve learned: I learned that to have the best moral theory is to simply have equal thoughts about men and women. People should not discourage the women to do what they want because as Annete said it is the women who have more natural empathy, better diplomatic skills, shoulder one responsibilities and care about the party feels.

Integrative Questions:

1. What is the main idea of justice according to Annette?
2. What is the Rawls point to justice?
3. What is Gilligan's view about justice and its perspective?
4. What it is being develop by moral tradition?
5. What are the reasons why women should not be contented to their liberal morality?